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How to teach the craft of writing



Karen Yager

Knox Grammar School

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Permission and time to play and experiment with writing

All too often students approach writing with trepidation and a reluctance to put pen to paper. We all have the potential to be creative and storytelling is an innate skill, yet too many individuals claim to be unable to write effectively. We need to ensure that we spend time immersing our students in the writing process. All students can write well when they are inspired and feel supported to take risks.

Imaginative writing like the finger paintings we all once did at school is messy. Students need to be reassured that writing in the initial stages is not perfect. It takes time, effort and practice to achieve artistry, and the process is iterative. If students are given the opportunity like great writers to reimagine, redraft and refine their writing, then every student can improve their skills and become increasingly confident and proficient writers.

Students need to be able to play and experiment with the sound, feel, look and meaning of words and the structure and impact of sentences. By crafting a plethora of imaginative pieces from poetry to vignettes through to creative non-fiction, students will begin to enjoy the craft of writing. This can only be achieved if you embed time for writing in your lessons every week. It might only be for a five minutes a day or one lesson a week, but you must be committed to valuing the need for students to have the freedom to explore, take risks and experiment with writing.

Learning from the masters

If our students are to be inspired to write with artistry they need to experience a plethora of quality texts that feature evocative settings, authentic characters, different approaches to form and structure, rich use of language and meaningful ideas. This must start in the junior years.

We need to remember to encourage our students to delight in the aesthetic and powerful use of language, and read like a writer. When we teach our students to read from the perspective of a writer, they focus less on *what* the writer is trying to say and more on *how* the writer is saying it. Specifically, they look at the form, structure and language the writer is using to convey their message and how the use of language affects them as they experience the text.

Our students are apprentice writers who need to learn from the masters. The poets teach our students about fusing the language into compact and powerful texts that appeal to the senses, embrace lexical density and use form and structure to convey ideas that resonate. The playwrights demonstrate how to play with dialogue to reach an audience and our authors teach the art of storytelling, provocation and characterisation. Photographers and painters provide fertile images that can trigger memories and stimulate ideas. The director teaches students to use verbal cinema to capture the intricate details, provide the back story and a mise-en-scene for a character and experiment with form, structure and points of view. The orator reminds students about the power of words, and the musician artfully plays with the sound of words and uses music to stir our emotions and imagination.

Immerse students in a plethora of extracts from texts that use language, form and structure skilfully. You could share a fabulous sentence, image or paragraph or an extract that has inspired you with your students at least once a week. Establishing a Master's Corner where you and the students share your favourite words or sentences by great writers every week is

one way to demonstrate the significance of artistry. If I were teaching a unit of work on the concept of characterisation, I could include the following quotes in the Master of Character corner:

- **Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*:** (Scrooge) "Oh! but he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge! a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster."
- **Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*:** (Pap) "There warn't no color in his face, where his face showed; it was white; not like another man's white, but a white to make a body sick, a white to make a body's flesh crawl – a tree-toad white, a fish-belly white."
- **Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*:** (Daisy) "That was it. I'd never understood before. It was full of money—that was the inexhaustible charm that rose and fell in it, the jingle of it, the cymbals' song of it. . . . High in a white palace the king's daughter, the golden girl. . ."
- **Rowlings' *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*:** (Headless Nick) "He wore a dashing, plumed hat on his long curly hair, and a tunic with a ruff, which concealed the fact that his neck was almost completely severed. He was pale as smoke, and Harry could see right through him to the dark sky and torrential rain outside."



Old Scrooge sat busy in his counting-house.

Rich texts

- **Poem Hunter:** <http://www.poemhunter.com/> - thousands of quality poems from all periods.
- **Australian Films:** <http://aso.gov.au/education/> - Clips from Australian films, documentaries and advertisements, and teaching resources.
- **Poetry Library:** <http://www.poetrylibrary.edu.au/poets-name> - Australian poetry library.
- **Poetry in Translation:** <http://poetryintranslation.com/> - Poetry from countries across the world.
- **Asiacha:** <http://www.asiancha.com/> - Asian poetry, short stories, creative non-fiction and essays.
- **Poetry Kanto:** <http://poetrykanto.com/> - A range of Japanese poetry.
- **Muse India:** <http://www.museindia.com/regular.asp?id=40> – A range of Indian poetry.
- **Inanimate Alice:** <http://www.inanimatealice.com/> - tells the story of Alice, a young girl growing up in the first half of the 21st century in China and Russia, and her imaginary digital friend, Brad. Fabulous inspiration for a multimedia narrative. Students could download or create postcards and use each slide in Power Point to write about their adventure.
- **Magic Keys:** <http://www.magickeys.com/books/>: A plethora of multimedia stories for all ages.
- **The Shed:** <http://www.literacyshed.com/the-other-cultures-shed.html> - brilliant site with a rich range of film clips, images and ideas to inspire writing for students of all ages.
- **National Geographic:** http://travel.nationalgeographic.com.au/travel/your-faces-of-the-world-photos/#/mursi-man-ethiopia_39901_600x450.jpg – a range of fascinating images of people from the net:

- **Tropfest film clips:** *Be My Brother* - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8d-7IFN4DKA>, *The Unspoken* - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ttA2Nk-bFog>, and *Lullaby* - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NAIvJ_hsW4I
- **Award winning GGI animations:** Such as *Home Sweet Home* - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aKRZn0uS6eA>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gmgQh2o9K-4> – *Worlds Apart*
- **Backhand Stories:** <http://www.backhandstories.com/non-fiction/> - a range of short stories, creative non-fiction and essays.
- **Newspapers:** <http://www.newspapers.com/> - 1200 newspapers from across America 1700-200s.
- **Free audio recordings:** <http://www.openculture.com/freeaudiobooks>
- **Songs to inspire writing:** <http://tylerlehmann.wordpress.com/2013/01/16/the-writers-playlist-15-songs-to-inspire-better-creative-writing/>
- *The Right Word: Roget and His Thesaurus* – Jen Bryant (3-6)
- *The Adventures of Beekle: The Unimaginary Friend* – Dan Santat (K-3)
- *El Deafo* - Cece Bell (4-6)
- *Rain Reign* – Ann M Martin (5-6)
- *Light Horse Boy* - Dianne Wolfer (5-6)
- *That Jack Boy* – Janeen Brian (5-6)

Sites to inspire speech writing

- **American Rhetoric:** <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkihadream.htm> - vodcasts and podcasts of speeches such as Martin Luther King.
- **Speeches:** <http://www.history.com/speeches/john-f-kennedy-rallies-hope-for-berlin>
- <http://www.history.com/speeches>
- **Great Speeches:** <http://www.guardian.co.uk/theguardian/series/greatspeeches>
- <http://thespeechsite.com/en/famous.shtml>
- **'40 inspirational speeches in 2 minutes':** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d6wRkzCW5ql>

Inspiring texts to read

Personal essays http://lithub.com/category/features/personal-essays/ http://www.asiancha.com/ https://www.creativenonfiction.org/online-reading/essays	Brendan Matthews, "Taking Inspiration from my Grandparents' Wartime Love Letters", http://lithub.com/taking-inspiration-from-my-grandparents-wartime-love-letters/ Orhan Pamuk, Taking Photographs in Istanbul, http://lithub.com/orhan-pamuk-taking-photographs-in-istanbul/
Poetry https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poems https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems https://www.poemhunter.com/ http://lithub.com/category/features/poetry-daily-fiction/ http://www.asiancha.com/ http://www.poetrylibrary.edu.au/poets-name - Australian poetry library	Gwen Harwood Omar Musa Robert Frost Kenneth Slessor Ted Hughes Maya Angleou Sara Teasdale Emily Dickinson WB Yeats John Keats Wilfred Owen Sylvia Plath

<p>Short stories</p> <p>http://lithub.com/category/daily-fiction/short-stories/</p> <p>http://www.asiancha.com/</p> <p>https://americanliterature.com/100-great-short-stories</p> <p>http://www.classicshorts.com/author.html</p> <p>http://www.openculture.com/2013/10/read-14-short-stories-from-nobel-prize-winning-writer-alice-munro-free-online.html</p> <p>https://www.ranker.com/list/best-short-story-writers-of-all-time/ranker-books</p> <p>https://longreads.com/2017/01/02/10-outstanding-short-stories-to-read-in-2017/</p>	<p>Tim Winton's <i>The Turning</i></p> <p>Jhumpa Lahiri's <i>Interpreter of Maladies</i></p> <p>Alice Munro</p> <p>Colum McCann</p> <p>Anthony Doerr</p> <p>Anton Chekhov</p> <p>Henry Lawson</p> <p>James Joyce</p> <p>Raymond Carver</p> <p>Margaret Atwood</p> <p>Ernest Hemmingway - http://pdbooks.ca/books/english/authors/hemingway-ernest/short-stories/part-one/fathers-and-sons.html</p> <p>Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie</p> <p>Michael Chabon</p>
<p>Novels</p> <p>http://lithub.com/category/daily-fiction/novels/</p> <p>http://www.openculture.com/free_ebooks</p>	<p><i>Catcher in the Rye</i> – J. D. Salinger</p> <p><i>Breath</i> – Tim Winton</p> <p><i>Atonement</i> – Ian McEwan</p> <p><i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i> – Mark Twain</p> <p><i>Great Expectations</i> – Charles Dickens</p> <p><i>Let the Great World Spin</i> – Colum McCann</p> <p><i>This Magnificent Desolation</i> – Thomas O'Malley</p> <p><i>The Penelopiad</i> - Margaret Atwood</p> <p><i>People of the Book</i> - Geraldine Brook</p> <p><i>The Narrow Raid to the Deep North</i> – Richard Flanagan</p> <p><i>The Unknown Terrorist</i> - Richard Flanagan</p> <p><i>The Ocean at the End of the Lane</i> – Neil Gaiman</p> <p><i>Snow</i> – Orhan Pamuk</p> <p><i>Snowdrops</i> – A. D. Miller</p> <p><i>Questions of Travel</i> – Michelle De Krester</p> <p><i>The Goldfinch</i> – Donna Tartt</p>
<p>Films</p>	<p>Tropfest</p> <p>CGI award winning films</p> <p><i>Cinema Paradiso</i></p> <p><i>Il Postino</i></p> <p><i>Pan's Labyrinth</i></p> <p><i>The Big Sleep</i></p> <p><i>Casablanca</i></p> <p><i>Citizen Kane</i></p> <p><i>Rear Window</i></p> <p>http://aso.gov.au/education/ - Clips from Australian films and documentaries</p>
<p>Creative non-fiction</p> <p>https://www.goodreads.com/shelf/show/creative-nonfiction</p> <p>https://www.creativenonfiction.org/online-reading/essays</p>	<p><i>In Cold Blood</i></p> <p><i>Into the Wild</i></p> <p><i>Running with Scissors</i></p>

Interactive online digital stories	<i>The Grey Tales</i> , http://kennedyandoswald.com/#!/premiere-screen <i>The Boat</i> , http://www.sbs.com.au/theboat/ <i>After the Storm</i> , http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/interactive/after-the-storm/#/dear-future-disaster-survivor Story Maps, https://www.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=9a763a9190f7498591b75bf2a8344cb9 <i>Tunnel Creek</i> – discovery of courage and strength http://www.nytimes.com/projects/2012/snow-fall/#/?part=tunnel-creek
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Over to you...

Share rich texts and sites that you use to inspire students to write:

Text	Why and how it is used

Immersing students in the writing process

If students are move towards mastering the art of writing, they need to learn to harness the power of language to suggest colour, sound and texture through imagery, provoke emotions and convey meaning. Confucius wisely observed that “*Without knowing the force of words, it is impossible to know more.*” Enabling your students to grow and expand their command of language and their ability to use effective figurative devices will lead to an improvement in the subtlety and depth of their writing.

This does not mean isolated lessons on word meanings or numerous, facile exercises identifying figurative devices. What it means is making students acutely aware of their language choices. Immersion in quality texts and continuous opportunities to write and reimagine and refine their writing will make a difference. These writing opportunities must be synergistically connected to the conceptual focus of what is being taught.

Artists see the minutiae of life

We are all often too preoccupied to truly see the world around us. Yet, it is often the small details that bring a place or a person to life. Writers and artists look beyond the superficial and capture the minutiae of life that offers more subtle nuances and provides interesting observations. The Romantic poets, such as Coleridge, used an object in nature as a springboard for their conceptual ideas. In his poignantly beautiful poem “Frost at Midnight”, Coleridge is sitting in front of the fire watching his young son sleep. The Frost performing its “secret ministry” and the dying flame of his “low-burnt fire” trigger a conversation with his sleeping baby about his hopes and dreams for his future.

We need to remind our students to open their eyes and see the potential in what is around them. Imagine if they are describing their own bedroom. If they just write about the furniture and the colours, then very little is revealed about them. However, if they focus on a significant object a number of important details in the room, such as an old teddy bear missing an eye who takes pride of place on their bed or a poster of Orion with Mars featured in the background, they begin to provide telling details of their life. These objects can then be used as a catalyst to recall a memory from the past or to project to the future to reveal dreams and aspirations.

Share Roger McGough’s poem “Smithereens” to amplify the importance of noticing the details of life:

I spend my days
collecting smithereens.
I find them on buses
In department stores
and on busy pavements.
At restaurant tables
I pick up the left-overs
of polite conversation.
At railway stations
the tearful debris
of parting lovers.
I pocket my eavesdroppings
and store them away.
I make things out of them.
Nice things, sometimes.
Sometimes odd, like this.

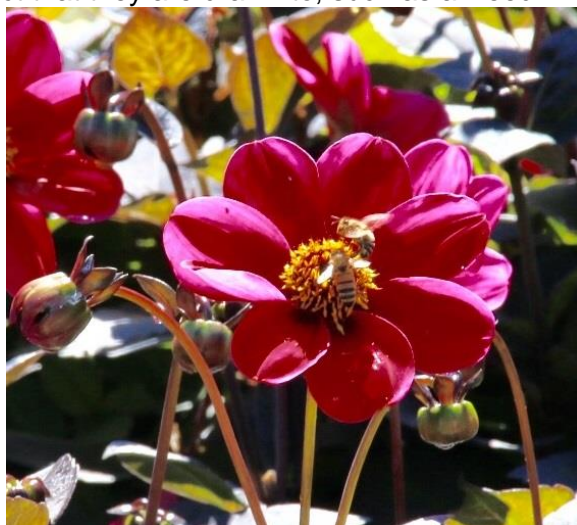
Approaches

- **Spotlighting:**
 - Word and sentence level
 - Lexical density
- **Structure:**
 - Purpose and audience
 - Form
 - Syntax and paragraphing
 - Framing devices
- **Senses:**
 - Sound: Auditory imagery - Euphony, discordance...the vowels and consonants
 - Sight: Visceral imagery - Figurative devices and word choice
 - Feeling: Nuances and emotive language
 - Smell and taste: Olfactory and gustatory imagery - Figurative devices and word choice

Micro-lessons focused on the writing process

Try these mini-lessons with your students to remind them of how when the details are included in an imaginative response more texture and interesting layers are added:

- **Micro-lesson 1: A special object or talisman:** Ask the students to describe an object that is special to them or a member of their family in approximately 200 words. Encourage them to take a photograph of it to accompany the writing. They begin by describing the object: its shape, colour and distinguishing details. Then they flashback to when they first received the object and recall when, where and how they got the object. They could add visceral and auditory imagery to show how the moment they received the object is etched indelibly in their memories. Finally, they return to the present and reveal why it is important. This short piece could then become the start of a longer narrative.
- **Micro-lesson 2: The world around us:** Take the students outside for a walk through the playground. Ask them to find an object that they are drawn to, such as a weed struggling to grow in the crack of a pavement, a piece of paper playing in the wind gusts, an ant valiantly navigating the treacherous expanse of the playground, or the bees gathering nectar from a flower... The possibilities are endless. Tell them that they have three minutes to observe the object and then two minutes to record a list of adjectives, verbs and phrases to describe the object. They have five minutes to compose one or two paragraphs that describe the object. When the time is up they find a critical friend and share their writing.
- **Micro-lesson 3: Through my window:** Ask your students to describe for homework in 250 words the view outside of their window. Remind them of how they could



employ descriptions that create the different types of imagery, such as visceral (what they see), auditory (what they here) and gustatory (what they smell). They could add a memory that is triggered by what they see. They could add a photograph or sketch of what they see through the window.

- **Micro-lesson 4: What makes us unique:** The next challenge for the students is describing a person they know well, such as a parent, a relative or a friend. They have to describe in 200 words what makes this person unique. It could be the way that the lines crinkle around their eyes when they smile or how they always wear their hair scraped back in a tight bun or how they have a silver cross that is normally hidden beneath their shirt but when they bend over it slips out to catch the light. They are only allowed to mention hair and eye colour if these are standout features.
- **Micro-lesson 5: Through different eyes:** The last challenge for your students is imagining that they are seeing the world from a very different perspective, that of an animal or bird. The owl featured in the photograph has binocular vision and can see small objects from great distances, such as a mouse. The students can select the owl or any other animal and describe the world through their eyes.



Verbal cinema

Film-makers see the world through the lens of a camera using a range of angles and shots. Their cinematic way of seeing means that will always notice the details and capture those elements in a frame that visually convey meaning. In film, a long shot establishes the subject, a medium shot conveys the important action, and a close-up shows what happened to the object. This approach can be adopted by students to improve their ability to capture settings and characters. They can even add editing techniques, such as jump cuts or a montage of images.

The students could begin with an establishing shot that sets the scene by describing what is visually present or an extreme close-up of an object, such as a faded black and white photograph of a young man in a uniform. With the close-up shot, the cinematic lens pulls back to a medium shot of an old man looking closely at the photograph. Through mise-en-scene, the room he is in is described to establish his character: the model airplanes on the mantel piece, a picture of a young Queen Elizabeth and threadbare furniture. A jump cut could follow to the old man as a young pilot flying over the Atlantic.

The writer Michael Ondaatje is well-known for his use of verbal cinema. In a beautiful extreme close-up in his novel *In the Skin of a Lion*, he writes “*He noticed a fragment of water under her eyelid, a sun tear she was unaware of.*”

- **Micro-lesson 6: Seeing through the camera lens:** The best way to learn to use this approach is by actually seeing the world through the lens of a camera. Take the students outside of the classroom and tell them that they will be writing the opening of a crime story. They have to decide what crime occurred and where in the playground. If they have a phone, they can take some shots to stimulate how they will construct visually the opening or make sketches. Remind them that they could begin with an establishing sequence or an extreme close-up.

You could make the activity even more exciting by creating footprints in a garden before your students go outside, and leaving clues such as, a crumpled note with the words “Help me” or a plastic cup with a red lipstick stain on its rim.

Ask them to take or sketch the following shots:

- A long shot of where the crime occurred.
- A medium shot of where the crime occurred.
- An extreme close-up of something that could be connected to the crime, such as the cup or the footprints.

The power of imagery

Like the great artists and writers, students can create evocative settings and authentic characters when they use language that is painterly. They need to be reminded that for imagery to be evocative it usually appeals to our senses, such as:

- a. Visceral imagery: Appeals to the sense of sight.
- b. Olfactory imagery: Appeals to the sense of smell.
- c. Gustatory imagery: Appeals to the sense of taste.
- d. Auditory imagery: Appeals to the sense of sound.
- e. Kinaesthetic imagery: Appeals to the sense of touch.

Or you they combine the senses and create synaesthesia as Bruno Schulz did in *Street of the Crocodiles*:

Adela would plunge the rooms into semidarkness by drawing down the linen blinds. All colors immediately fell an octave lower the room filled with shadows, as if it had sunk to the bottom of the sea and the light was reflected in mirrors of green water.

The following mini-lessons provide the students with the opportunity to experiment with imagery:

- **Micro-lesson 7: Blending sound and imagery:** The sounds of words can have a powerful impact on how we react to a piece of writing. The repetition of the 's' sound through sibilance can be melodious or even sinister depending on the combination of words. Plosive consonants, such as 'p', 'b', 'd' or 'k' when combined with pugilistic verbs, such as 'punched', 'struck' or 'ripped' or for a disjunction such as 'but' add an edgy tension to the writing. This can be compounded by short vowel sounds. In contrast, fricative consonants such as 'f', 'm' or 'l', especially when amplified by long vowel sounds can be quiet and gentle or somnambulant. Get the students to describe in a paragraph using auditory imagery combined with careful word choice based on the consonants and vowels the following:
 - a. Snarling and jostling traffic at peak hour.
 - b. Seagulls sparring over food scraps at the beach.
 - c. The final moments of a major sporting final, such as the World Cup, when the scores of both teams are equal.
 - d. The house in the early hours of the morning when everyone else is asleep.
- **Micro-lesson 8: Symbolism and motifs:** When writers use recurrent motifs or symbolism they are able to add a deeper and more provocative layer to their writing. Provide the students with the following objects that can be used symbolically and ask them to incorporate one into a 200 word piece of writing. They could begin with an extreme close-up of the object and describe its intricate details or they could subtly weave the symbol into their writing.

Object	Symbolic meaning
key	Unlocking the past or a mystery; finding the answer
door	Possibilities; a new beginning; something hidden
rose	Love; loss
clock	The fleeting nature of life; being controlled by time
light	Illumination; hope; optimism; new beginnings
Autumn	Middle-age; passing of youth
rainbow	New beginnings; hope; promise

Verbs, the muscles of writing

Students need to learn that verbs are the muscles of writing and the masters of polysemy as they can convey multiple meanings in a single word. When students improve the quality of their verbs they are able to eliminate unnecessary adverbs and adjectives that clutter the writing.

When students are writing on a particular topic or for a specific activity, it is worthwhile building a class list of strong and striking verbs that is displayed in the room and distributed to all students. If students are to master the art of writing, they do need to build their vocabulary.

The following micro-lessons are designed to build the students' understanding of the influential role that verbs play in writing.

- **Micro-lesson 9: Verbs drive the action and imagery:** In the following extracts the writers have used verbs to breathe life into the scene they are describing. Some of their verbs are deliberately onomatopoeic:
 - **Colum McCann's *Let the Great World Spin*:** "Around the watchers, the city still made its everyday noises. Car horns. Garbage trucks. Ferry whistles. The thrum of the subway. The M22 bus pulled in against the sidewalk, braked, sighed down into a pothole. A flying chocolate wrapper touched against a fire hydrant. Taxi doors slammed. Bits of trash sparred in the darkest reaches of the alleyways. The leather of briefcases rubbed against trouserlegs. A few umbrella tips clinked against the pavement. Revolving doors pushed quarters of conversation out into the street."
 - **Richard Flanagan's *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*:** "As the old draught horse Joe Pike called Gracie amiably trotted along, Dorriggo would sway back and forth and imagine himself shaping into one of the boughs of the wildly snaking peppermint gums that fingered and flew through the great blue sky overhead. He would smell damp bark and drying leaves and watch the clans of green and red musk lorikeets chortling far above. He would drink in the birdsong of the wrens and the honeyeaters, the whipcrack call of the jowittys, punctuated by Gracie's steady clop and the creak and clink of the cart's leather traces and wood shafts and iron chains, a universe of sensation that returned in dreams."
 - **Tim Winton's *Cloudstreet*:** "Kids were bombing off the jetty as she passed under the Norfolk pines. The water was a flat bed of sunlight and the brownslick bodies of children bashed through into its blue underbelly."
- a. As a class, identify and discuss the impact of the verbs in the extracts. Vote as a class on the most potent verb!

b. Instruct the students to apply the same approach to a scene that they can recall vividly. They need to focus on using descriptive verbs and ensure that they use sound devices, such as onomatopoeia, sibilance, alliteration or assonance. If they are not sure of what to describe, they could use one of the following:

- Surfing at the beach
- Building a sandcastle
- Shopping at the Boxing Day sales
- Riding a rollercoaster at an amusement park
- Riding a skateboard down a steep hill
- Skiing down a mountain
- Playing a computer game

- **Micro-lesson 9: Noun-groups to build descriptions:** A very simple and accessible way to elevate your students' ability to craft effective descriptions is by focusing on building noun groups. A noun group is a cluster of words around a noun or pronoun to modify or add further information, such as Who?, What?, To whom?, and About whom?

The students can easily do this by combining two adjectives before a noun and a prepositional phrase after a noun. E.g. "The chubby, happy child with two pronounced dimples..." Have your students complete the following activities. They do not have to write complete sentences in the table.

Activity 1

Noun	Modifiers	New description
city	Add two adjectives before the noun	
traffic	Add an adverb and an adjective before the noun	
work	Add a hyphenated noun adjective (e.g. time-saving) before the noun	
villain	Add two adjectives before a noun and a prepositional phrase after a noun	
widow	Add an adjectival clause (e.g. who was lonely) after the pronoun	

Activity 2

Take on the above nouns and create a striking description using the noun-groups in 150-200 words. Read it aloud to another student and ask them to critique your description. Make any suggested changes.

- **Micro-lesson 10: The 50-word challenge:** Being forced to comply with a set word limit is challenging but it does hone a student's writing skills as they have to be very specific and discerning when it comes to the words they choose to use. You can add extra challenges to this task, such as the letter 'e' has been banished from the alphabet or they have to use a motif or an extended metaphor.

This 50-word challenge involves writing a mini-narrative about one of the following scenarios. The students must feature a doorway or portal in the narrative, and they can use first or third person.

1. Lost in the wilderness
 2. Journeying on a train across the countryside
 3. Visiting a National Museum
 4. Climbing to the base-camp of Everest
 5. Exploring an ancient site, such as the Coliseum
- **Micro-lesson 11: Master Chef Story Challenge:** Place students in a small team or on their own and give them a box with the following ingredients. They have 30 minutes to create a masterpiece. The ingredients:
 - 50-words only
 - Specific ingredients in the secret box. E.g.
 - A shell
 - Two words: “memories” and “hidden”
 - A flower
 - A line of poetry – ‘*To see a world in a grain of sand...*’

Setting

Your students’ imaginative responses can be enriched and deepened when they begin with setting and focus on crafting an authentic place. Try the following strategies:

- Immerse your students in extracts from poems, short stories, novels, travel articles and films that develop place skilfully.
- Use photographs and encourage your students to take photographs.
- Get them to describe their world: the sights and sounds, and how they feel about this place.
- Teach them about synaesthesia so that they learn to blend the senses in their writing.

Students need to take note of the following:

- Zoom into the setting and focus on the details. Let the reader see the setting! This will not happen if they skim over the details. So much can be revealed when they do this. It could be a close-up on a photograph with shattered glass or a locket with a broken chain.
- Focus on the craft of writing: imagery, figurative devices, syntax, punctuation and structure. Synaesthesia – combining the senses – brings the writing to life!
- Ensure that the readers can ‘see’ the setting – don’t neglect those small details that can capture the essence of a place!
- Writers use pathetic fallacy to reflect the emotions of their characters or narrator. Get students to read the extract from Nam Le’s short story about his father ‘Love and Honour and Pity and Pride and Compassion and Sacrifice’ and then layer this approach into a 200-word extract.

‘... all I saw was a man coming toward me in a ridiculously oversized jacket, rubbing his black-sooted hands, stepping through the smoke with its flecks and flame-tinged eddies, who had destroyed himself, yet again, in my name. The river was behind him. The wind was full of acid. In the slow float of light I looked away, down at the river.

On the brink of freezing, it gleamed in large, bulging blisters. The water, where it still moved, was black and braided. And it occurred to me then how it took hours, sometimes days, for the surface of a river to freeze over—to hold in its skin a perfect and crystalline world—and how that world could be shattered by a small stone dropped like a single syllable.'

Micro-lesson 12: Research like a writer: When writers create a setting for a narrative, they have usually done extensive research or even visited there. Place the students in groups and allocate them a setting. The groups have to research the place on the internet, and if possible, use Google Earth to look closely at the place. The students have to try to paint the setting in just 200 words using sensuous imagery, place names and figurative and sound devices. They can write in the first or third person. The settings:

- a. Moscow in the winter
- b. London near the London Bridge and the Tower of London during spring
- c. Old Delhi during the summer
- d. Amsterdam in the winter
- e. Hong Kong during an afternoon shower
- f. Abu Dhabi by night
- g. Waikiki in Oahu Hawaii looking at the ocean during a light rain shower and seeing a rainbow on the horizon.

Characterisation

The art of constructing a character is challenging. Ascribing a character with physical and emotional attributes, attitudes, values, actions, relationships and dialogue to ensure that they are believable and engaging, takes a great deal of planning and reflection. It is important to inform your students that characters and their perceptions reflect the context, values, experiences and intent of the composer. Perhaps the most challenging aspect of characterisation is creating realistic and effective dialogue.

The other significant aspect of characterisation is that humanity is complex. Shakespeare was an accomplished master of characterisation with his nuanced characters who were capable, like Macbeth, of great heroism but were seduced by their dark side and embraced evil. He introduced the notion of binaries, but his main characters were a complex melding of evil and good. Your students need to ask Hamlet's famous question "What piece of work is a man (and a woman)?" when constructing characters. They need to ensure that their representations are subtle and that the clash of qualities and flaws is evident.

It is worth providing your students with the following recommendations:

- The most effective writing is based on the people we encounter in our lives. Listen to the voices of people you know and consider their attitudes, values, emotions, relationships and actions.
- Look into the mirror and write yourself into an imaginative response. You could take an aspect of your life and spice it up with your imagination.
- Reveal the character's backstory in a few simple words or sentences rather than telling the story of their past lives. For example, to explain the backstory of a character who has experienced violence at the hands of their father, could be done in a single sentence: "Every time he shaved, he traced the now faded long scar that ran down the side of his face. It was a constant reminder of the angry lash of his father's belt buckle but it was also a potent reminder of how he would never be like him."

- Consider how to represent the characters semiotically. How do they dress? What does their room or office reveal about them? Do they have a talisman?
- Read great novels and short stories that feature a plethora of characters and voices, such as: *The Catcher in the Rye*, *Jasper Jones*, the *Harry Potter* series, *Great Expectations*, *To Kill a Mocking Bird*, *Lord of the Flies*, *Huckleberry Finn* and any novel by Tim Winton.

Students need to consider:

- Characterisation is that crafting of a character: the way a writer constructs his or her appearance, actions, attitudes, beliefs, relationships, words, experiences and life lessons.
- The most effective writing is based on student's lives and experiences. They need to consider the people they have met, even themselves and create one or more characters.
- The character's perception and how this perception has been shaped by his or her context, attitudes, assumptions, experiences, values, perspectives and perception.
- How to reveal the character's backstory in a few simple words or sentences.
- The dialogue and how it can be used to effectively capture and reflect the characters.
- How to represent the characters semiotically.
- Students need to revisit how to use the stream of consciousness for a character. They need to experience a range of approaches, such as the third person, the omniscient narrator and the direct address to the reader.

Ways to build characters and dialogue

- National Geographic faces of the world:
<http://travel.nationalgeographic.com.au/travel/your-faces-of-the-world-photos/>
- Paintings and photographs off the net.
- Build your wild self:
<http://www.buildyourwildself.com/> - Create a half-human half animal character and download them so that they can become the main character in a narrative or blog story.
- Voki: <http://www.voki.com/> - Create an avatar for a blog story or students can play with the crafting of a character. They can add setting, clothing and even record their character's voice.



Micro-lesson 13: The people in my life: The most effective characters are based on the people that composers know or have met in their lives. They are more likely to be able to describe their appearance in more detail or represent their moods or habits more authentically. For this micro-lesson the students return to the memory that they had to recall from the past in Micro-lesson 1. They take the memory that they wrote and add a person who was a significant part of the memory. It could be a parent, a best friend, a grandparent or a neighbour. They continue the original memory by adding in this person. When they share the description of this person with a fellow student, the students must be able to easily visualise them. They need to consider their:

- Mannerisms
- Voice – include dialogue
- Appearance
- Body language
- Dress

- Relationships with others
- View of the world
- Beliefs, attitudes and values

The ideas

Students need to approach the imaginative response with a range of ideas that have been provoked by their exploration of a range of texts and their own lives. When a student has considered the key ideas, their imaginative responses are more focused and meaningful. The only warning is that they must not neglect the art of writing. The danger is that they can compose an imaginative response that is too general and ideas driven rather than one that engages the reader through artistry.

Try the following activity with your students:

1. Based on their exploration of a range of texts and their experiences of people and life what ideas do they have about the human condition?
2. Brainstorm a number of ideas using a mindmap. They could use spicynodes - <http://www.spicynodes.org/>.
3. Use a range of film clips and photographs to spark ideas, such as animations from the Vancouver film school on YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o31rcOUPviw>.
4. Once they have arrived at an idea, decide upon on the following:
 - a. Where the imaginative response could be set.
 - b. What type of character or characters move in this world.
 - c. The verbs that could be used to drive the idea.
 - d. How they can weave in tension through language. They need to think about the sound and length of the words. Plosive consonants and short vowel sounds can convey discordance and unease.
 - e. The figurative devices that could be used to convey the idea.
 - f. The structure that could frame this idea. What opening and closing?
 - g. The key incidents and details that frame this idea.

Varying the Structure and Form

- **Flashback:** Start at the end and show what has led to this moment. Get the students to begin a narrative with the conclusion and write backwards.
- **Multiple Perspectives:** A story told through two or more characters. Get the students to write in pairs writing as the same character but with an altered perspective, such as a hero transformed into a villain.
- **Multiple Narratives:** Different stories connected by a theme or a motif, such as: survival. The students could work in groups of three. Each student could write in a different time period but their stories are connected by the theme of survival.
- **Pastiche:** Include a range of text forms such as: a narrative, newspaper clippings, a text message or MySpace posting. Scavenger Hunt on the net: Students have 10 minutes to find on the internet unrelated items such as: a headline, an image, a blog posting and an advertisement.
- **Circular Structure:** A story starts at a specific moment in a story; flashes back to explain the lead-up to this moment, and then finally returns to the original specific moment. Students are given a scene such as: Watching a game show on television or swimming at the beach. They have to begin and end in this same place.

Poetry

We need to immerse our students in a range of engaging and beautifully crafted poetry. The poets teach our students about fusing the language into compact and powerful texts that appeal to the senses, embrace lexical density and use form and structure to convey ideas that resonate. Through poetry, students of all ages learn to hear, see and feel the impact of a word.

The following sites feature poetry and ways to create poetry:

- **Wordle:** <http://www.wordle.net/> : Create a word cloud poem or use Wordle to revise poetic devices.
- **Sonnet Central:** <http://www.sonnets.org/> - access to hundreds of sonnets and recordings too inspire writing.
- **TATE William Blake:** <http://www2.tate.org.uk/williamblake/> - poetry and paintings by Blake.
- **Spicy Node Poems:** <http://www.spicynodes.org/teachers-3.html> - teacher resources that demonstrate how students can create a spicy node poem.
- **Knowing Poe:** http://knowingpoe.thinkport.org/default_flash.asp - Edgar Allan Poe's poetry and short stories.
- **Yeats' 'An Irish Airman Foresees his death':**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tLvHTDa1fkE> – a moving animation of the famous poem.
- **Billy Collins' poetry:** 'Walking Across the Atlantic'
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ADCIXAixe0M> 'Forgetfulness'
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n-a8ELOVig4>; 'Some Days'
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yaBeaQHdrGo>; 'Now and Then'
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k0xiWuwGq8M>; 'Budapest'
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vqnec1r9YuU> – America's former poet laureate's poetry animated evocatively.
- **Rap and performance poetry:**
 - Omar Musa, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3u8dz50GbVk> and My Generation
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DtscGNZxn4>, What will be left of us? (Dystopia)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0YFSKhqC9rU>
 - Taylor Mali, What do teachers make?
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h5yg0u1MkDI>, Totally like whatever, you know,
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LGAMd-tT6fQ>
 - Sarah Kay, For my Daughter <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8sSfbQk7DxE>,
Hiroshima, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AXb9N2cVUs4>
 - Rick Mayall, The Theatre <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l0Ho9T2TcPY>
 - Maya Angelou And I still rise - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JqOqo50LSZ04>

Mini-lesson 14: Haiku: The haiku with its clever fusion of words to create an evocative image is the ideal form for students to cultivate the craft of writing. As they are restricted to only using a limited number of syllables the students are forced to carefully consider the words they elect to use. The purpose of the haiku is to convey a feeling or distil an image. They were originally inspired by nature.

Although they often have a 5-7-5 syllable structure, the students can play with the length of the lines or create two juxtaposed haikus.

Matsuo Basho who created masterful haikus that captured what he was describing simply and evocatively provides ideal models for the students, such as the haiku he wrote when he was dying.

Sick on my journey,
only my dreams will wander
these desolate moors

Provide the students with a series of images and ask them to create a haiku that captures the moment. Before they start they need to engage their senses. They need to ask:

- a. What do I see?
- b. What sounds would I hear if I were there?
- c. What would I smell?
- d. How would I feel?

Fireworks



Encounter with a seagull



Sunset



The pelican



You could take the students outside instead of providing the images, and ask them to focus on the details of an object.

To extend your students ask them to incorporate two juxtaposed ideas so that the haiku has a deeper metaphorical meaning.

Mini-lesson 15: Playing with the sound and rhythm of words: Let your students have fun with onomatopoeia poems that include the other sound devices to describe the sounds associated with a scene or an object. Your students could describe one or more of the following in short paragraphs, and then eliminate words to create short free verse poems:

- An alarm clock incessantly reminding them that it is time to get up for school
- A washing machine on spin cycle
- A weekend market filled with shoppers and buskers
- The hiss and spit of rain on a pavement after a hot day
- The cacophonous sound of white noise in a school playground at lunchtime from the perspective of a student who wants to be left alone
- Trying to listen to a movie at the cinema when you are surrounded by the crunching sound of chips and popcorn being eaten

Mini-lesson 16: Preposition poems: When we observe life we see things as they happen in the moment. Poets often begin lines with a preposition to so that the reader is immersed in the place and time of a poem. They provide direction and invite the reader to see through the persona's eyes and move with them through a poem.

Your students now create a short prepositional phrase poem with five or seven lines that enables the reader to experience what they see and hear, such as:

- Beyond the...
- Through the...
- Near the...
- Below the ...
- Despite the...

Students could use any of the following common prepositions in phrases:

aboard	about	above	among
against	according to	across	after
as	as to	along	alongside
amid	around	before	behind
below	beneath	beside	between
beyond	but	by	despite
down	during	except	for
from	inside	instead	in
into	like	near	next
of	off	on	onto
outside	out	over	past
since	than	through	throughout
to	toward	under	underneath
unlike	until	up	upon
with	within	without	within

They could write a prepositional poem about one of the following:

- Riding a wave on a surf-board
- Walking through a bush trail
- Walking through a busy shopping centre during lunchtime
- Visiting a place for the first time
- Looking at rock pools beside the ocean
- Looking at a waterfall
- Visiting an old country store or an op shop with multi-coloured clothes and bric-a-brac

As an extension activity, ask the students to include a key message or theme.

Mini-lesson 17: Art and poetry: The combination of art and poetry ignites creativity. Get your students to create an original poem and artwork that reflect a concept or theme and are connected physically and metaphorically. The famous poet William Blake cleverly combined his poetry and his etchings.

Students do not have to be an artist to create a great art work. Their work can be symbolic. The words could wrap around and through the artwork or letters could be drawn to reflect what they represent, such as the word 'river' flowing down a page.

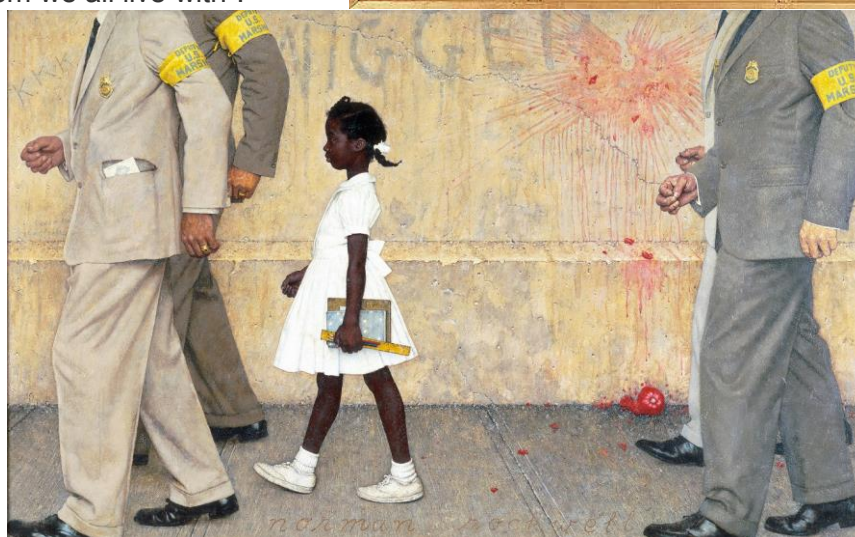
Many art galleries around the world have websites that feature their collections. Some even provide exciting and engaging art and poetry activities. You could visit the following art galleries:

- The J. Paul Getty Museum
- The Louvre
- The Tate United Kingdom
- Moma, New York
- NSW Art Gallery

Micro-lesson 18: Ekaphrastic Poetry: Ekaphrastic poetry is inspired by a photograph, image or artwork. One of the most famous examples is John Keats' poem "Ode to a Grecian Urn". Using a stimulus such as a painting or a photograph provides students with the initial topic and ideas. They already have a context and a strong starting point for a poem.

Provide students with images of the following artworks:

- Russell Drysdale's "The Drover's Wife"
- Fredrick McCubbin's triptych "The Pioneer"
- Johannes Vermeer's "Girl with a Pearl Earring"
- Edward Hopper's "Night-hawks", "Automat" or "Cape Cod Morning"
- Norman Rockwell's "The Gossips", "Willy Gillis in Convoy" or the provocative 1964 painting below that tells such a poignant story – "The problem we all live with".



Ask them to complete the following exercises:

1. Select a painting that speaks to you.
2. Research the artist and the painting.
3. Describe what is happening. Focus on using striking verbs!
4. Describe how the people in the painting feel. Focus on developing evocative adjectives, emotive words, strong verbs and striking imagery.
5. Decide what has happened or will happen. Focus on positional prepositions.
6. Develop a key message or theme. Focus on emotive words.
7. Compose an original ekaphrastic poem!

An interesting alternative is to organise an excursion to the local art gallery and have the students select a painting, photograph or sculpture to create an original poem, such as the following activity:

A painting captures an elusive moment in time. The people and the landscapes forever frozen in a frame. Imagine what these people have seen in their life time with the passing of time. How much has changed?

The NSW Art Gallery features many paintings of people from the past. Imagine what their life and times were like when the artist painted their portrait. Moreover, imagine the changes they would have witnessed over time as each year passed. What changes would the young girl have seen in Philip Richard Morris painting “Quite Ready”?

Think about what happened in Australia’s history in her time: the Eureka Stockade, the hanging of Ned Kelly, Boer War, Federation, women’s right to vote and so much more... Or what if she stepped out of the frame in 2015 and entered your world! How would she respond and what would she see that is so different?



Your challenge is to select any painting of a portrait of an individual or an individual with a group of people from any of the exhibitions and create an original poem that reflects what an individual has witnessed with the passing of time. You could imagine that they lived for 50 years after their sitting for the artist or that they have stepped out of the frame into your world and they are confronted with a time that is so different to when their image was captured.

Micro-lesson 19: Memory poems: When we are asked to recall the past and describe our memories of what happened, we are often easily able to write about it. Words and ideas flow when we write about our personal experiences.

Read the extract from James Berry’s poem “Childhood Tracks” to your students to stimulate their ideas:

Eating sheared ice made into ‘snowball’ with syrup in a glass...
Drinking cool water from a calabash gourd on worked land in the hills...
Smelling a patch of fermenting pineapples in stillness of hot sunlight...
Hearing the laughter of barefeet children carrying water...
Seeing children toy-making in a yard while slants of evening sunlight slowly disappear...

Ask the students to recall a childhood memory and to retell it to the student next to them. Then get them to write a description of what they recall. Once they have done this, they now need to refine and decant what they have written to create a short free verse poem.

Some possible triggers for memories could be:

- A backyard swing
- Grandma’s sponge cakes
- A photograph
- A locket
- Backyard cricket
- The Royal Easter Show or a local fete
- A grandparent’s stories

Micro-lesson 20: Embracing the remix: The use of ‘creative imitation’ offers model patterns for students to play with and then use in their own writing. T.S. Eliot once wrote “*Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal; bad poets deface what they take, and good poets make it into something better, or at least something different.*”

A canto is a patchwork poem where lines are stitched together from different poems to create an ‘original’ poem. R.S. Gwynn took lines from poems in the *Norton Anthology of Poetry* to create “Approaching a Significant Birthday, He Peruses *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*”. Here is an extract from the end of the poem:

The world is too much with us, late and soon.
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil.
Again he raised the jug up to the light:
Old age hath yet his honour and his toil.
Downward to darkness on extended wings,
Break, break, break, on thy cold gray stones, O sea,
And tell sad stories of the death of kings.
I do not think that they will sing to me.

Tell the students that they have 25 minutes to ‘steal’ lines from a range of poems that you have provided or that they find online. They can only appropriate one line from each poem, and they can make slight changes to each line. Remind them to keep a record of where each line originated. They need to create an ‘original’ poem centred on a theme, such as war, prejudice or growing old. Imagine the poem they could create using Wilfred Owen’s “Dulce et Decorum est”, Rupert Brook’s “The Soldier”, Bruce Dawe’s “Homecoming” and Carol-ann Duffy’s “War Photographer”.

Another approach is to get your students to create redacted or erasure poems. Provide the students with an extract from a novel or short story. It could be from a text that they are studying currently. Instruct the students to blank out the words that do not stand out or highlight the key words that demand attention. They then use the remaining or highlighted words to create a poem. If they are studying the text then the poem they have created should reflect or even challenge the theme or message of the text.

Art & Poetry inspired by Fairy Tales



Background Information:

There have been many art works that have been based on famous fairy tales, such as the two Dina Goldstein's paintings featured that are based on Snow White and Sleeping Beauty.

The Task:

Your task is to create an original representation on an A4 sheet and an accompanying narrative or poem that is inspired by a fairy tale, such as Rapunzel or Red Riding Hood. You can transport the fairy tale character to the present and imagine what their life would be like today or change the ending of the fairy tale, such as having the wicked stepmother in Snow White triumph.



Marking Criteria




Marking Criteria	Writing	Representation
Interpretation of the task	/5	/5
Creativity	/10	/10
The interconnectedness of the writing and the representation	/5	/5
The message conveyed by the representation and the writing	/10	
Total	/50	

Art & poetry inspired by colour and light

Objects reflect light in different ways. The wavelengths of these reflections determine the colour that our eyes and brain perceive. Without a light source to reflect from an object, we would not see any colour at all. The magical interplay of light and colour in different places in America influences the way we see and remember the special geographical features of these places.

The Task

Your task is to create an original poem and artwork inspired by the concept of how colour is associated with different places in America. Your team is to select a place and compose a poem and accompanying artwork that captures both light and the main colours associated with this place. The poem and artwork must be connected. Remember to include a key message connected to colour. You must include the following components:

-  A focus on colour and light
-  An extended metaphor related to colour
-  At least one example of alliteration and emotive language

Components

Explain briefly how you have incorporated the following in your poem. Explanations are worth 5 marks.

- A focus on colour and light (2 marks)
- An extended metaphor related to colour (1 mark)
- At least one example of alliteration (1 mark)
- At least one example of emotive language (1 mark)

Marking Criteria	Poem						Art			
Interpretation of the task	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3
Creativity using the components in the poem and the materials in the artwork	Focus on c & l: 0 1 2						0	1	2	3
	Extended metaphor: 0 1 1						0	1	2	3
	Alliteration: 0 1						0	1	2	3
	Emotive language: 0 1						0	1	2	3
The interconnectedness of the poetry and the art	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
The message conveyed through the art and poetry about light and colour	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
TOTAL	/40									

Persuasive Writing and Rhetoric

'Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has' (Margaret Mead, anthropologist, author, intellectual 1901-1978).

By composing and responding with feeling, logic and conviction, students will develop an understanding of the significance of language to people of all cultures and times. The following notes feature a range of approaches that you can use with your students to develop their art of rhetoric.

Introduction to Rhetoric

- The YouTube clip- '40 inspirational speeches in 2 minutes' - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d6wRkzCW5ql> - will be used to introduce the concept of rhetoric.
- Students to visit <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhetoric> and <http://www.putlearningfirst.com/language/20rhet/20rhet.html>, and prepare a 30 second report or rap for the class that captures what is rhetoric.

Key features of Rhetoric

Students view and analyse a range of film extracts of famous speeches:

- *The King's Speech* – The last speech - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AHY2UzOonig> and the actual speech: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=opkMyKGx7TQ>
- *Lord of The Rings* – Aragon's 'It is Not This Day speech' - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zdMN_1b2nEA
- *Pirates of the Caribbean* - Pirate King Elizabeth's 'Hoist the Colours' speech - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fINeo6sWqGI>
- **(Extension)** *The Great Dictator*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6FMNFvKEy4c>

Students to discuss the following:

- What makes them inspirational
- The message and the key ideas
- How language features are used to persuade and position people to respond in a desired way
- How delivery: expression, pace, pitch, stress, intonation, etc. are used to deliver a persuasive speech.
- The use of rhetorical appeals: ethos (credibility), logos (intellectual power) and pathos (emotional power).

Significance of context, audience and purpose

Students analyse, discuss and respond to the following texts:

- Elizabeth 1 - Delivered by Elizabeth to the land forces assembled at Tilbury - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=35djJpYpP7k>
- Henry V St Crispin's Speech 1599 – Shakespeare - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dDZVxbrW7Ow>
- Abraham Lincoln - Gettysburg, Pennsylvania November 19, 1863
- Chief Joseph, "Surrender Speech" - October 5, 1877; Montana Territory

They should focus on:

- The influence of context, audience and purpose on the content and language
- The composers' capacity to engage and persuade an audience through the use of rhetorical appeals: ethos (credibility), logos (intellectual power) and pathos (emotional power).

The Power of Rhetoric

Class discussion and analysis of the purpose, content and language features of John. F. Kennedy's inauguration speech delivered in Washington on January 20 1961 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HEPHihPw-kE>. This is to be used to model the group analysis of the next three speeches. Groups to be allocated one of the three speeches. The team is to become the experts on the speech and its rhetorical features. They answer the following questions:

1. When was this speech delivered and who is the audience?
2. What is the purpose of the speech?
3. How are the rhetorical appeals of ethos (credibility), logos (intellectual power) and pathos (emotional power) employed?
4. How are language features and structure used to inform and persuade?
5. What is the key message?
6. Why is this speech significant?

The other speeches are:

- Severn Suzuki's speech delivered at UN Earth Summit 1992 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uZsDliXzyAY>
- Princess Diana Speech - Responding To Landmines, June 12, 1997 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-p7FN9pglY>
- Apple CEO Steve Jobs to graduating students at Stanford University, June 12, 2005 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UF8uR6Z6KLc>

Narrative Rhetoric

"Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity."

Stories have the power to entertain, delight, teach, inform and persuade. We are innately drawn to stories. Myths and legends were used to teach ethics, morals and traditions. Many modern day speakers use storytelling to convey significant messages. Narrative rhetoric synthesises dialectically the aesthetic literary form and the persuasive argument. The use of the rhetorical appeal of ethos (credibility), logos (intellectual power) and pathos (emotional power) are features of narrative rhetoric.

Since the beginning of time, humanity has used stories to reinforce important values and convey key messages. The epic tale *Gilgamesh* conveyed the significance of courage, moderation and loyalty.

- Students to listen to the TED talk by Novelist Chimamanda Adichie - http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story.html and discuss as a class what Adichie is saying about the importance of hearing multiple stories.
- Maya Angelou's 'My Childhood'

- *The Unspoken* - Tropfest

Original Persuasive Story

The students plan a persuasive story. Once they have planned them, they are then create a Pecha Kucha (20 images X 20 seconds – the images advance automatically) to deliver the persuasive narrative. Go to <http://www.pechakucha.org/> to share with the students some exciting Pecha Kuchas. Remind your students that they need to choose potent and evocative images as the images are as important as the story. Tell them to access <http://www.powerpointninja.com/graphics/what-makes-an-image-good-for-presentations-part-i/> that explains how to choose images for a presentation. <http://www.speakingaboutpresenting.com/content/fast-ignite-presentation/> - provides an outline of how to create a Pecha Kucha.

Further Resources

- Speeches: <http://www.history.com/speeches>
- Great Speeches: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/theguardian/series/greatspeeches>
- Speeches: <http://thespeechsite.com/en/famous.shtml>
- '40 inspirational speeches in 2 minutes':
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d6wRkzCW5qI>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQmz6Rbpnu0>
- Rhetoric: <http://www.putlearningfirst.com/language/20rhet/20rhet.html>
- American Rhetoric:
<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkihadream.htm> Vodcasts and podcasts of speeches such as Martin Luther King.
- Novelist Chimamanda Adichie's narrative speech:
http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story.html
- Choosing powerful images: <http://www.powerpointninja.com/graphics/what-makes-an-image-good-for-presentations-part-i/>
- Pecha Kuchas: <http://www.speakingaboutpresenting.com/content/fast-ignite-presentation/>; <http://www.pechakucha.org/>

Using technology to improve the craft of writing

Digital Texts

One of the most exciting uses of technology is as a tool that students can use to create original texts. You can open end and differentiate assessment by encouraging students to present information or create texts in any medium of production. This empowers students by giving them choice and access to a diverse and rich range of programs and websites.

Imagine that instead of a student being asked to write a narrative in word, they are invited to create a digital text that features images, sounds and transitions that represent the mood and themes of the story. Even students who struggle with story writing develop confidence in their ability to craft an original text. They can add the images, voiceover, sound and even video clips.

If you restrict it to 300 words and get them to focus on: powerful verbs, imagery and even include a motif such as a mirror and a concept such as duplicity, then the students refine their writing skills and 'play' with words and syntax. They will find voice, confidence and structure in their writing.

Suggested approaches

- The digital story can be used to present alternative endings, hybrid genres, change a character from a hero to a villain, and shift the setting and time using power point, a word document and prezi.
- Create a digital narrative or non-fiction text such as a report or evaluation using a range of sources or texts, such as: an interview, a newspaper report, an SMS message, a twitter text, a journal entry, etc.
- Capture the memories of community members such as the local fireman, policeman or politician or an elder. Scan their photographs in and create a rich record of their story!
- Powerpoint can be used to hyper link to facts, statistics, images, documents, etc.
- An imaginative narrative in Movie maker or Photostory can include factual commentary, graphs, etc.
- The time-line digital story is an exciting way to represent the interplay of history and memory. Students could construct a timeline and include hyperlinks to personal diary or journal entries or eyewitness accounts. See *Our Story* - <http://ourstory.com/> - to create stories, photos and videos on a collaborative timeline.

Digital Story Resources

- a. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/audiovideo/sites/about/pages/howto.shtml> – an interesting site where pupils can view interesting digital stories and learn how to create them.
- b. Photobus, <http://www.photobus.co.uk/index.php?id=2>
- c. Story Centre, <https://www.storycenter.org/stories/> - year 10 and 11 students only
- d. Animation station, <http://www.animation-station.com/>
- e. Flickr, <http://www.flickr.com/>
- f. History made every day, <http://www.history.com/media.do> - free video clips
- g. Stories of Service, http://digiclub.org/sofs/index.php?page_id=1 – war veterans in America share their digital stories
- h. Celtx: <http://www.celtx.com/> - Free software for scriptwriting and storyboarding.

Creating texts

- **Celestia:** <http://www.shatters.net/celestia/>: pupils explore the universe in three dimensions - travel throughout the solar system to any of over 100,000 stars to be inspired to create science fiction stories or use the stills and clips to create their own short film or digital story.
- **The Hero's Journey:** <http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/herosjourney/> - planning for a hero's journey narrative and the elements of the hero's journey.
- **My Hero:** <http://myhero.com/go/home.asp> - students can read about people's heroes and add their own to this site.
- **Create an Online Story:** <http://storybird.com/create/>
- **Build your wild self:** <http://www.buildyourwildself.com/> - create a half-human half animal character and download them so that they can become the main character in a narrative or blog story.
- **Voki:** <http://www.voki.com/> - create an avatar for a blog story or students can play with the crafting of a character. The students can add setting, clothing and even record their character's voice.

The power of feed-forward to improve the writing

We need to enable our students to own and embrace the learning, take risks, and become confident and agile learners who have agency. Agency is a mindset, strongly correlated to emotional intelligence. It creates learners who take risks, fail and find new and better ways. Students with agency capitalise on failure and are willing to refine and re-imagine their writing. They are open to learning and resist the temptation to become defensive when their teacher and others provide constructive criticism. When they receive feedback, they take the time to reflect and consider how they can apply the feedback to improve their writing.

Do your students monitor their own progress, know what they need to improve and plan how to improve their writing? Agency is evident when your students are active participants in the learning. They do not wait for the teacher to tell them what to do and how to do it. They have the power to act. They are self-organising, proactive, self-regulating and self-reflecting. The challenge is how to develop self-efficacy and agency in our students.

There are a number of enablers that foster agency, helping students to master the process of learning. To move from the craft of writing to artistry, our students need to believe that:

- Their teacher knows and understands them.
- They are positively supported in a classroom conducive to learning and capitalising on failure.
- They are stretched through high expectations and challenging tasks
- They are taught explicitly the mechanics of writing.
- They are provided with continuous opportunities for trial and error to improve their skills and knowledge.
- They are provided with strategic, honest and timely feedback so that they know how to improve their writing and achieve success.
- They know the criteria for success and how to improve their writing skills, and support their peers to achieve success.

Student Perception Survey

This survey is designed to ascertain your perception of imaginative writing. Thinking about your skills, knowledge and understanding of writing, how much do you agree or disagree with the following? For each statement, please indicate your position at this moment.

Perceptions	Strongly Disagree 1	2	Disagree 3	4	Neutral 5	6	Agree 7	8	Strongly Agree 9
I enjoy writing imaginative responses									
I am confident about my ability to write effectively									
I have a clear understanding of the writing standards that are expected									

I know what skills are needed to write an effective imaginative response									
I know the essential components of an effective narrative									
I am confident that I will be able to self and peer critique the writing we do in class									
I will set learning goals that will help me improve my writing this term									
I am prepared to work harder and smarter to improve my writing skills									

Feedback

We need to provide honest, precise and timely feedback to our students on their writing. Unless, a student knows what they have to do to improve, their writing will stagnate. We can address this by providing exemplars of great writing by published authors and students, using explicit marking criteria and checklists, and training our students to become expert markers, but our feedback to our students can make a real and measurable difference.

Quality feedback focuses on the mechanics and the conceptual ideas of writing as it is progressing, and provides clear attainable goals for students. It should enable them to identify and address any gaps or flaws in the writing and take immediate action.

We cannot provide quality feedback if we are not providing multiple opportunities for our students to practise the art of writing. Waiting until the final summative assessment task at the end of a unit of work is not effective or conducive to improving our students' writing. The student usually looks at the mark or grade, and if they already have a fixed mindset regarding their ability to write imaginatively, they will not bother to read the comments. The flaws will not be addressed, and their agency will be compromised.

Rather, we need to provide continuous feedback that is targeted. Instead of waiting until the final task, empower your students to be highly effective markers and writing coaches, and provide feedback that is chunked. Building your students' writing skills can be best achieved by providing short formative tasks that target a particular skill or aspect of writing, such as

the orientation, setting, characterisation or the use of figurative language. This means that the amount of reading and marking generated by your students' writing is reduced, and you can return their work to them with precise and targeted comments in a shorter time span, amplifying its effectiveness. The micro-lessons are designed to enable you to achieve this in your classroom.

Self and peer-critiquing

Our students need know the quality of performance that is expected of them and the criteria against which their writing will be judged. They need to be immersed in the marking process and have a deep understanding of the expected standards and the marking criteria. By empowering them to take charge of the marking and provide quality feedback to their peers, they will develop greater insights into the standards that are expected and gain the understanding and the confidence to evaluate the quality of their own work and others. Professor John Fischetti from the University of Newcastle stated that students come to school, not to learn, but to watch teachers work. It is time that students came to school to learn and work as a team with their teachers and their peers.

To achieve quality self and peer critiquing, you need to model how this is done through your feedback, and provide the students with explicit marking criteria and checklists. You also need to have established a positive and supportive classroom environment, where the students perceive they are working with you and their peers in a high performance team. This team knows that recognising and acknowledging errors enables each member to improve, sharing and celebrating quality writing sets the bar high for all team members, and supporting each other to improve will make a discernible difference to their writing.

Activities

- 6 minute writing task every lesson and peer marking
- Team approach – we are in this together – collaborative competition
- Jigsaw or cafes
- White-board work
- Deconstructing questions and scaffolding
- Designing questions and composing possible answers
- Learning through argumentation deepens the learning
- Targeted feedback and *feed-forward*: This could be mean targeting the use of striking verbs or engaging openings.
- Teach explicitly reflection and critical evaluation
- One minute essay, Pecha Kucha, one sentence summary, concept map or persuasive speech in the middle of the term to assess learning – enables you to provide immediate *feed-forward* for follow-up task at the end of a term.
- Left-base questions tackled by students in teams to problematise the learning
- Google docs or drive
- Exemplars
- Google Docs
- Checklists
- Review comment
- Screen-cast-o-matic
- Comments and no marks
- One on one conference
- Speed dating
- Team challenges
- Provocative questions

Creative Writing – Peer Evaluation

The following scaffold is designed to help you give constructive feedback for your peer on their creative writing. The categories below are to both help with the clarity of their writing, as well as the quality for the audience. A quality text is effective in drawing us in to the world of that text, while making us think and emotionally engage with the characters, environment, experiences, relationships and issues in that world.

Fundamentals of Communication

The table below contains the fundamental categories we use to identify aspects of writing. These are essential for simply communicating clearly, effectively and accurately. **Circle** or **highlight** where they fit on the scale for each category, then list as accurately as you can the strengths and weaknesses of the piece.

Writing Category/Aspect	Scale/Ranking/Rating				
Syntax: word choice and the clarity of a sentence, such as consistent tense, correct verb form and sentence length.	Elementary	Basic	Sound	High	Outstanding
Spelling: plurals, homonyms, verb forms, all words and their various forms are spelled correctly.	Elementary	Basic	Sound	High	Outstanding
Punctuation: commas, apostrophes, speech marks, full stops are used correctly.	Elementary	Basic	Sound	High	Outstanding
Greatest Strengths		Areas of Most Needed Improvement			

Broad Qualities of Engaging Texts

The table below contains the general qualities of key textual elements we may find in an engaging text. These are some ways we could describe engaging aspects of a text. **Circle** or **highlight** where they fit on the scale for each category, then list as accurately as you can the strengths and weaknesses of the piece.

Qualities of Engaging Texts	Scale/Ranking/Rating				
Setting: the place, environment and tone/atmosphere of the text is engaging, drawing us into the world of the characters.	Elementary	Basic	Sound	High	Outstanding
Character: the characters are believable, interesting, relatable or challenging and	Elementary	Basic	Sound	High	Outstanding

therefore keep us interested in their journey. They may help us empathise with them.					
Plot: the series of events, actions, climax and conclusion are interesting, thought-provoking, relatable, challenging or charming.	Elementary	Basic	Sound	High	Outstanding
Greatest Strengths		Areas of Most Needed Improvement			

Sharing Ideas and Strategies

In groups, share your approaches to improving the writing. Create a list of at least ten approaches.

Approaches	Approach or Activity